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RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4789
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 4844
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 7429
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7881
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 5983
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 8190
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000958

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHA POWELL, SINGER AND FENDRICK
DEPT FOR EAP/J
USDA PASS TO APHIS
HHS PASS TO CDC
HHS FOR OGHA STEIGER, BHAT AND ELVANDER

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [KSTH](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [WHO](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: JAPAN WEEKLY REPORT FEBRUARY 23

REF: A. 05 STATE 153802
[1](#)B. TOKYO 850 AND PREVIOUS

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[1](#)1. (U) No human or animal outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza (AI) were reported in Japan during the past week.

-- Dead Bird Calls, Tabletops and More Money: Local Preparations Continue Throughout Japan --

[1](#)2. (U) On February 15, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) established a call-in desk to gather information on the deaths of wild birds from citizens. Tokyo's Environment Bureau said information collection efforts would particularly focus on cases where there are multiple deaths or repeated bird deaths in one area. After receiving a call from a citizen, the government plans to conduct tests on any suspicious cases to identify the cause of death or infection. This is a preventative measure the TMG is taking as part of its overall preparedness planning, as no outbreak of avian influenza has been confirmed in the metropolitan area to date. The desk will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through mid April, which is the season when migratory birds fly back to Siberia.

[1](#)3. (U) On February 17, Nagasaki Prefecture authorities conducted a tabletop exercise to review the steps they would take using their preparedness plan from the moment an avian influenza infection was confirmed through the end of the outbreak. Around 200 officials from local governments, the Nagasaki Veterinary Medical Association and the Nagasaki Livestock Industry Association participated. The exercise assumed that avian influenza infection was confirmed at a poultry farm that had 16,800 chickens. The participants confirmed their respective roles in the overall response, including in the areas of establishing a task force, testing for viruses, placing restrictions on the transfer of eggs, sterilizing infected poultry houses, and culling the infected chickens.

[1](#)4. (U) Yamanashi Prefecture released its draft JFY2005 supplementary budget request that includes Yen 2.8 million

(USD 24,348) for measures to prevent avian flu from spreading. The request will be submitted to the prefectural assembly for approval shortly.

-- The Hatchet to Fall on Unlucky Ibaraki Birds: Tokyo Encouraging Reporting by Sharing Costs of Culling --

¶5. (U) The Ibaraki Prefectural Government began culling an additional 2.5 million chickens at eight farms in the prefecture on February 20. The chickens had been under government surveillance because antibodies showing past infection with the avian influenza virus were detected earlier in birds living at the farms. The government had lifted restrictions on the farms because tests for the H5 virus in the indicator birds ultimately came back negative, but because the chickens became unsellable due to consumer fears, the government will share the costs for culling the birds with the central government. Ibaraki plans to finish culling the chickens by mid April.

-- More on Tokyo "AI Network" --

¶6. (U) On February 16, ESToff and EST FSN met with Kazuhiro Takahashi of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's (TMG) Bureau of Social Welfare and Public Health to learn more about Tokyo's "AI network" that was first reported in Tokyo ¶729. The TMG established an Infectious Diseases Information Network with its "Asian Network of Major Cities 21" (ANMC21) city partners. ANMC 21 was formed in 2000 to share information and expand cooperation between the ten cities on a variety of social issues, public health being one of them. The TMG is currently acting as the secretariat for the Network.

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¶7. (U) Takahashi explained that the "AI network" is in fact one part of the overall Infectious Diseases Information

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Network that will cover a full range of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases such as SARS and HPAI. It is a work in progress and will eventually become a vehicle for exchanging information on AI outbreaks between the ten cities. The Network will employ an Internet discussion board to facilitate information exchange between the various city governments. Participants plan to upload their action plans, and in emergency situations, information will be distributed to the members by e-mail.

¶8. (U) The Network's website further describes its mission: "The Infectious Diseases Information Network System will directly link government agencies, research and medical institutions located in each member city of the ANMC 21 with each other via a specific Web site on the Internet. Information about infectious diseases including specific cases, infection routes and medical treatments will be shared. At present, information concerning any foreign outbreak of an emerging infectious disease, such as SARS, is conveyed via national governments or the World Health Organization (WHO). However, several problems are associated with obtaining information via this method. Delays in the transmission of information, the one-way flow of information and the non-uniformity of such information are issues of concern."

¶9. (U) Takahashi explained that the Network will allow local officials to freely exchange information without the "interruption" of national governments. In Tokyo, officials from public health facilities, research institutes and medical institutions will be able to access the network, but central government authorities such as are the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor (MHLW) and National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID) will most likely not be invited to participate. Takahashi also said that only organizations and groups within the Tokyo

Metropolitan area would be allowed to participate.

¶10. (U) In addition to Tokyo, the other members of the Network include: Bangkok, Delhi, Hanoi, Taipei, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Singapore and Rangoon. Beijing was originally a member of the Network, but had withdrawn from it completely in late August 2005, the day before a meeting was held to establish the project. Tokyo does not have any plans to expand the member cities involved in the Network at this time, but Takahashi admitted that the TMG would consider any requests for participation from others if approached.

¶11. (U) When asked if the Network would cooperate with other existing mechanisms or networks on infectious diseases in the future, Takahashi said the group was not considering doing so at this time, because such a project would be more suited to the national government rather than municipalities.

¶12. (SBU) Comment: Assuming that the Network takes off and grows into what the participants hope it will become, it may become a useful source of preliminary information on avian influenza outbreaks and local government efforts in the ten member cities. Based on the conversation with Takahashi, it is clear that at this point in time, the Network is still in its infancy, and only time will tell if officials in the member cities will use it to its fullest potential. The possibility for synergies with current USG efforts in the region may be somewhat limited at this stage, but depending on the level of participation from the various cities such as Rangoon, the Network may offer potential insights into the AI situation in Burma and other places that may not be reported otherwise. End comment.

¶13. (U) Further details on ANMC21 can be found by clicking on the link below.

http://www.chijihon.metro.tokyo.jp/asianet/in_dexe.htm

SCHIEFFER